



Eileen Donoghue
City Manager

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TO: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *END*
FROM: Shannon Norton, Executive Director, MassHire Lowell Career Center
DATE: January 6, 2021
RE: C. Mercier - Req. City Mgr. Provide A Report MassHire And The Status Of Employment and Any Grant Availability

The MassHire Lowell Workforce Board and Career Center received a two-year Department of Labor National Health Emergency Dislocated Worker Grant to address the Opioid Crisis in 2019. This grant was slated to end December 31, 2020. We asked for, and received, an extension of one more year and the new end date is December 31, 2021. While we do have funding to keep our internal staff on board until the end of the grant, we ran out of funding for the Work Experience line item.

This line item was originally budgeted for \$600,000. We increased in by \$38,500 several months ago by shifting funds from other line items. This line item was put in the grant for two reasons. One was to provide participants directly affected by the Opioid Crisis in paid work. Participants could work up to 40 hours a week at \$15 an hour. This gave participants a chance to work in organizations that work with people with substance use disorder and gain experience. The second benefit was to the organizations who were able to utilize the labor provided by this grant. This was highly successful. Originally, we anticipated 40 individuals taking part in this. We ended up with 45 participants of which 10 were hired directly by the worksites. The breakout of the organizations that participated and the wages paid by this grant to the participants that worked are as follows:

Worksite	Total Wages by Worksite	# Participants
24 Hour Power Recovery Art	\$ 9,578	1
Bridge Club	\$ 117,008	9
CTI/YouthBuild	\$ 1,043	1
Elevate New England	\$ 9,683	1

Eliot Church	\$ 4,976	1
Life Connection	\$ 84,979	5
Living Waters	\$ 4,103	2
Lowell - Health Department	\$ 5,258	1
Lowell House	\$ 46,110	3
Megan's House	\$ 28,980	1
Middlesex Sheriff's Office	\$ 66,390	3
Phoenix (part of MSO)	\$ 34,913	2
Merrimack V. Food Bank	\$ 25,976	2
New Challenge	\$ 18,600	1
Place of Promise	\$ 20,978	2
Stepping Stone	\$ 89,250	5
Tewksbury Police	\$ 14,528	2
Thrive Recovery	\$ 51,645	3
	\$ 633,994	

Unfortunately, we had to inform our worksites that we could no longer pay our participants to work at their sites due to the expiration of funds in this line item. We will look at other line items and seek approval to replenish this worksite line item. However, that will only get us so far. The goal for our staff is to help these participants find unsubsidized permanent employment. Several of these participants are in, or have completed, occupational training in areas like addiction counseling and recovery coach certification. Their experience at these worksites coupled with their occupational training will make them marketable to work in these fields, helping others who have are going through what they have went through.

We will continue to work with our state partners to find funding to keep serving this population. We know how important this work is and what it means to those in recovery and to the organizations that are working with them. I appreciate any assistance from our local delegation and Congresswoman Trahan's office in identifying any federal or state funding that may come available in the future to keep this program going. They have been very supportive of this program and we appreciate all the support we have received. I would be pleased to come back to the Council with an informational report towards the end of the year as we wrap up this grant.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at snorton@lowellma.gov or (978) 805-4816.